

The 9 Lives of 8 Standish Street

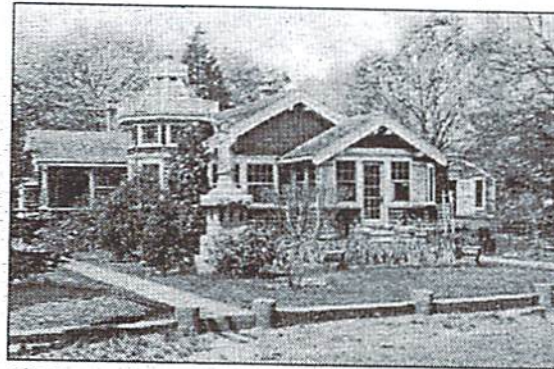
By TONY KELSO

The small yellow building in Hall's Corner known as 8 Standish Street is like a little old person who has led nine lives. You continue to marvel at the evolving tale and how with each life the tale gets more fascinating. 8 Standish Street lends not only curiosity but scale and color to a corner that teems with the bustle of people going about their daily errands.

Like many Duxbury buildings, Eight Standish St. did not begin its life where it is today. The building was first built as a slaughterhouse somewhere around 1850. It was built by George Bradford, a butcher who worked for

the Weston family and their ship-building enterprises. For many years, it was thought the slaughterhouse first stood on Bradford's

farm on Temple St. in North Duxbury. Recent deed research elsewhere tells another story.



68 Depot Street, where Duckie and Katherine Freeman lived.

The slaughterhouse originally came from what is called as the St. Margaret's property on Washington St. This shorefront property was one of the Weston shipyards, known as the "Navy yard" because many of their larger ships were built there. After the Westons opened their shipyard on Powder Pt. near the King Caesar house and after the business began to slacken in the 1850s, the Navy yard property was sold in 1861 to George Bradford, who likely continued to butcher and prepare meat for the Weston fleet as long as there were ships sailing from Duxbury to outfit with provisions. In 1874 Bradford sold the property and returned to his North Duxbury farm. He also reserved the right to remove the slaughterhouse by 1875.

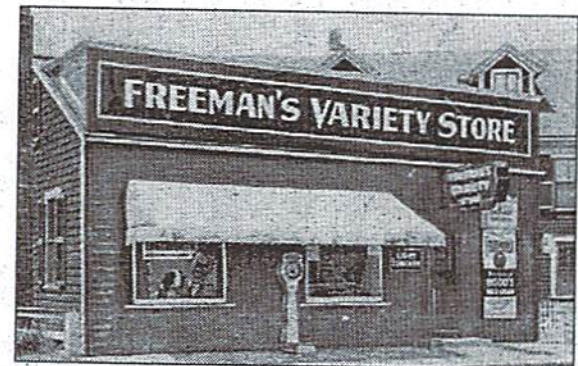
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Bradford sold his slaughterhouse to James and Caroline Myrick. They had recently moved to Hall's Corner and built a building that was a combination tinsmith shop and living quarters for the Myrick family. This building is known today as 1 Bay Road. The slaughterhouse was moved to Hall's Corner and attached to the rear part of 1 Bay Road where it became further space for James Myrick's tinsmith and stove business that lasted until his sudden death in 1902.

Grace Myrick, one of the "Myrick girls," remembered large rings bolted to the walls of her father's tinsmith shop that came from the days when the building was Bradford's slaughterhouse.

Another fascinating story about 8 Standish Street's construction is that it might contain a brace from Duxbury's second meetinghouse, which existed from 1707-1784.



Freeman's was a fixture in Hall's Corner for 24 years.

Names
& Places

The Myrick's reported in an 1897 *Old Colony Memorial* story that when they bought and moved the slaughterhouse, George Bradford told them that when he built it he used a large wooden brace. Ezra Weston had given him earlier. According to Myrick,

according to Bradford, according to King Caesar, the old meetinghouse ended its days as a barn on the St. Margaret's property and that Weston saved some pieces of it to be used in various buildings. At any rate, somewhere in a corner of 8 Standish Street supposedly is a large, whitewashed triangular brace that came from one of the town's meetinghouses.

After 8 Standish Street ceased being a stove and tinsmith shop, it was moved once again. This time it was merely detached from 1 Bay Road. In the widening of Hall's Corner between 1928-1932, the building was faced to Standish Street where it stands today. Then began its third life.

The Myrick family in 1932 fixed up the building and leased it to Walter "Duckie" Freeman and his wife Katherine, who opened and ran Freeman's Variety store from 1932-1956. Freeman's was a fixture in Hall's Corner and was patronized by year round as well as summer residents and tourists.

"Where Variety really means what it says" was its slogan and its stock ran from newspapers to penny candy to cigars to novelty items. For a time, they also had a small lunch counter where light lunches were served. The Record Center at Freeman's had records and sheet music for the Duxbury teenagers of the 30s, 40s and 50s. It also had one of the few pay phones in the Corner as well as the movie schedules for the theaters in Plymouth and Brant Rock.

Duckie and Katherine Freeman were beloved, if cantankerous characters. They lived in the little brown bungalow at 68 Depot St. still standing next to the A&P plaza. Alas, the miniature of the Statue of Liberty that adorned their front yard is now merely a stump. Many long-time residents have Duckie and Katherine stories about their cranky but caring store keeping and personalities. After Duckie's death in 1956 at only age 51, Katherine moved the variety store across the street where it was later run by the Thomas family as Ken's Variety.

The building at 8 Standish St. from 1956 until the late 1970s became Francis Ortolani's dentist office. Today, Denise's Studio 8 hair salon and Robson and Gallison's interior decorating shop happily carry on business and are more layers to the character of the building's nine lives. Variety really is the soul and in the frame of the history of 8 Standish Street, a building that adds so colorfully to the business of Hall's Corner.